

SUGGESTIONS OF EMPLOYEES FOR AVAILING FURTHER STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY WELFARE MEASURES IN PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONS IN ERNAKULAM DISTRICT

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Abstract

Labour welfare measures are the efforts of the employers for creating a state of happiness, health and prosperity of the labourers in the organisation. These welfare measures are provided voluntarily or involuntarily, or sometimes beyond the custom and practice of the organisation.

'Labour welfare measures' cover all the aspects of industrial life which contribute to the well-being of the workers. It is one of the most important aspects of industrial relations: the complex inter-relationship between the employers and employees, the labourers and trade-unions, employer and the government. The labour welfare measures of the organisations are chiefly controlled by legislation, and based on the legislation there comes the decision of the employer to provide the same or better than the same. But, normally, legislation is only a bench-mark for the provisions of labour welfare measures, as almost all employers take their decisions by their own with the implementation of the provisions. Provisions to the labour welfare measures is the policy decision of the employer in the industry.

Though the present employees are availing statutory and non-statutory welfare measures in every organization, the unexpected pandemics and natural calamities create a difficult situation for the authorities as well as to the employees in maintaining motivation and productivity. In this juncture, the only way to overcome the difficulties is to motivate the employees by giving further welfare measures in order to boost their satisfaction level, which ultimately leads to increased productivity. The present study was made with a view to forward suggestions regarding further welfare measures based on the opinions of employees working in the public sector organizations in Ernakulam district. A descriptive methodology is used for the study. Survey is the method used for data collection and data were collected from the employees of the public sector undertakings, namely the Bharat Petroleum Company Limited Kochi and Cochin Shipyard Limited, by circulating a Google form. The sample consisted of 100, which was drawn by random procedure. Data collected were compiled and analysed statistically. The survey results portrayed the importance of further welfare measures such as internet charge, free vaccination to employees and their dependants, full pension, improved washing facilities etc. The researcher has forwarded a few suggestions regarding welfare measures and has concluded with an opinion that investment in labour capital in the form of further welfare measures will never be fruitless to the government as well as to employers, instead it will bring prosperity to all concerned.

Key terms: *Statutory, non-statutory, labour welfare measures and public sector organizations.*

Introduction

Human resources is of paramount importance for the success of any organisation. They are the wealth of an organisation which can help it in achieving its goal. The profitability of the organisation depends on the productivity of the employees. The Welfare measures will improve the physique, intelligence, morality and standard of living of the workers, which in turn will improve their efficiency and productivity. The employees' welfare schemes act as a morale booster. When the employees get an appreciation for what they do, it helps in increasing their work efficiency. Presently the country and the world are passing through a pandemic situation, the need for giving more and more welfare schemes for the employees become essential, otherwise it will lead to an organisational failure.

Statement of the problem

Statutory labour welfare measures: toilet facilities, facilities for storing and drying clothing, facilities for sitting at the work spot, first-aid facilities, canteens, shelters, rest rooms and lunch rooms, crèches and service of welfare officer/s are to be compulsorily provided by the employer. On the other hand, non-statutory schemes: personal health care, flexible working time, employee assistance programmes, protecting the aggrieved employees, maternity & adoption leave, medi-claim insurance and employee referral scheme are implemented voluntarily by the employer. Whatever be the welfare measure, it is the result of the legislation or the decision of the government or the employer, respectively.

Demand for goods and services aimed at better standard of living is never ending and that shall not be saturated easily when the labourers raise their claim for progress. Welfare measures availed at a point is not at all static for the labourers, as the demand for commodities and services increase in the economy. Adding more items to the list of non-statutory labour welfare measures is the only option before the employers to generate co-operation, motivation and productivity of each labourer. Suppose, each labourer is given an opportunity to suggest further welfare measures under non-statutory category, what all new requirements would they point out? It is against this background the present enquiry has been planned to know the will of the labourers about their demands and expectations on welfare measures. The study has the following objectives:

Objectives

- a) To survey the knowledge of the labourers in Public Sector Undertakings, on statutory and non-statutory welfare measures.

- b) To collect suggestions of the employees for further welfare measures under statutory and non-statutory categories.

Need and significance of the study

Welfare measures, statutory or non-statutory for the employees in an organisation are available only on the order of the government and on the final decision of the employer. Government order, which is a result of legislation in the parliament or the individual decision of the employer, which represents his/her willingness are basis to grant welfare measures. Government order or initiative of the employer together materialise into the sanctioning of welfare measures for the employees, which are dynamic and vibrant according to the societal needs, cultural environment and personal factors of the employees. Statutory or non-statutory measures once found reasonable and justifiable need not be found a realistic appraisal of possibilities, when changes are inevitable with regard to profitability, productivity and industrial relationship. In such a situation, what is wrong in pooling the suggestions of the employees - the real beneficiaries, in revising the existing provisions for welfare measures, especially in a democratic set up where majority has a say?

This study has significance in terms of its relevance and innovativeness, as the technique of the study, the survey, gives an opportunity to the stake-holders to point out their further expectations towards labour welfare measures. The survey is experimenting a new culture of participation of the employees to suggesting new facilities that they feel more crucial than the provisions unilaterally decided by the employers. Besides, the survey tests the knowledge of the employees towards the existing statutory and non-statutory welfare measures, which may otherwise make them to think logically with motivation expected from them as a member of a production-oriented public sector organisation.

Review of previous studies

In this category, eight studies have been presented chronologically. Following studies examine the categories of labour welfare measures: statutory and non-statutory and the impact in various organisations in different parts of the country. As all the studies are of recent ones, the suggestions implied in each have more relevance.

In the experimental research of Balaji P. and Jagadeesan D. (2019), the sample of 350 manufacturing companies of Chennai were taken for the analysis. The main aim was to study the imperativeness and dimensions of labour welfare measures for employees' fulfilment in manufacturing companies. Here they made an attempt to explore the fulfilment of labour welfare measures in selected manufacturing units. In order to collect the employee perception, they used exploratory and descriptive research methods upon the importance of various welfare measures with respect to their nature of employment. Statistical tools such as percentage, ratio, ANOVA, 't' test etc. were used for analysis. At the end of the study it was observed that fulfilment of welfare measure variables were reduced to seven independent factors and the most dominant factor was found to be the amenities factors followed by environmental factors, physical well-being, comfort factor, yardstick factors, food factors and supervision factors in the order of their importance. The authors concluded the study by

highlighting the importance of counselling facilities, transport facilities, medical facilities in the order of their importance to enhance their satisfaction level.

Jyothi Sanyal and Sujit Sikidar (2018) in their article "an appraisal of employees' welfare and social security measures in Central public sector enterprises" made an attempt to analyze the opinions of employees in respect of welfare measures and social security benefits and level of satisfaction in respect of social security measures. The study is descriptive in nature and convenience sampling technique was used. The study was conducted with a sample size of 180 employees. The major findings of the study were a) majority of the non-executive and executives are moderately satisfied with the washing facilities and first aid box facilities, and b) the employees are highly satisfied with the drinking water facilities and educational facilities. They also suggested for making some improvements in the canteen facilities and recreational facilities. For the better functioning of the organisation they recommended the facility for the appointment of a body for improving the welfare and social security benefits.

Arpit Patel, Archana Gohil and Heli Shah (2017) accepted a descriptive research design which managed to analysing the problems existed in the organisation. The authors of this article opined that labour welfare measure was an essential variable of enterprise-relation because it contributed to the profitability of the entity. Here labour welfare measures cover conditions of well-being, happiness, satisfaction, protection and advancement of human resource. The major objective of the study was to find out whether labour welfare facilities had significant influence on the employees' satisfaction level. By using both primary and secondary data they reached a conclusion that the GO GO Ltd was giving good labour welfare facilities to the employees. The study also reveals that majority of the facilities provided by this organisation are satisfactory.

In the study of J. A. Raja (2016), he has discussed the effectiveness of labour welfare measures provided at SSI in Hosur. He gives attention to understand the attitude of the employees towards labour welfare measures and he analyses the feedback of the respondents in order to reach a meaningful conclusion. In the study, data collection and information retrieval are mainly based on scientific tools and techniques. The researcher has concluded that labour welfare measures proved to an important factor than any other factors of production in the firm. The study revealed that, if these measures were provided in the fullest extent, workers' self-interest and motivation would have increased, which would ultimately accomplish organisational growth. Implementation of labour welfare measures will help to neutralise the effect of large scale industrialisation and urbanisation. It is considered as one of the successful techniques to maintain employees in the organisation.

M Rajarajan and M Vetrivel (2015) took initiatives to publish their analysis about various welfare measures and quality of work life among the workers towards Sipcot industry in the Asian Pacific journal of research. The major objective of this study was to analyze the quality of work life among the workers in this organisation. Since it is a labour intensive industry it needs to concentrate more in the areas of employee welfare. The major finding of this study was that quality of work life will have direct and indirect relationship with the economic and social well-being of large portion of the population. This article highlights the various welfare measures and quality of work life among the workers.

M Srinivasa Rao and G Vidyanath (2015) conducted a comparative study on the effectiveness of non-statutory employee welfare measures with special reference to housing facility in sugar mills in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh. The study was made with the objective of critically evaluating the effectiveness of canteen facilities and offers some suggestions for finding improvement of canteen facilities in the organisation. Survey method of research was adopted for this study, both primary and secondary data were used. Interview method was conducted for collecting the data from employees. The major findings of the study were that, most of the workers are pleased with the welfare actions in the organisation and the organisation focuses on other facilities like, crèche, increasing employees' morale etc. Another finding was that; the staff members' spirit is good in the organisation. The study concluded with a suggestion to take necessary action to increase the welfare measures in the organisation in order to motivate the workers.

The study of Manasa B.R. (2015) was based on the objectives: identifying various labour welfare measures provided by the organisation and studying employees' satisfaction towards these measures. The study highlighted two categories of employee welfare schemes i.e. intra-mural and extra-mural. The first one was compulsory and the other one was optional to the organisation. The author shared his finding that the main purpose of employee welfare was to enrich the quality of the life of employees and to keep them satisfied and contented. This paper contributes to the in-depth analysis of both intra-mural and extra-mural welfare measures and their impact on employee satisfaction of Cement Corporation of India units, Thandur and Adilabad. The study was also extended to analyse the lay-off benefits provided to temporary workers.

Though the researcher could identify several previous studies related to the impact of statutory and non-statutory welfare measures, studies directly related to further requirements of the employees with regard to the welfare measures, were rare. So that, the present study which compensates the shortage of studies on labour welfare measures in this line of thought, i.e. suggestion of employees for further non-statutory welfare measures, was an urgent need. Analysis of the data and findings of the present study would be important for the policy makers for taking further decisions for sanctioning non-statutory welfare measures, as the employers are to be liberal to the demands of the employees.

Methodology

Descriptive methodology is used for the study with the purpose of making suggestions for further statutory and non-statutory welfare measures, which will lead to employee satisfaction and organizational growth in the public sector undertakings in Ernakulum district.

Survey is the method used for data collection from the employees of the public sector undertakings namely, the Bharat Petroleum Company Limited Kochi and Cochin Shipyard Limited. The sample consisted of 100, which was drawn by random procedure. Data collected were compiled and analysed statistically. Following is the tool administered by the researcher herself, for which Google form has been utilised.

Table 1. Survey form

Suggestions of employees for availing further statutory and non-statutory welfare measures in public sector organisations in Ernakulam district

1. Please give tick mark to the following statutory welfare measure/s enjoyed by you in the organisation where you are an employee.

- Section 42 – Toilet facilities
- Section 43 – Facilities for storing and drying clothing
- Section 44 – Facilities for sitting at the work spot
- Section 45 – First-aid facilities
- Section 46 – Canteens
- Section 47 – Shelters, rest rooms and lunch rooms
- Section 48 – Crèches
- Section 49 – Service of welfare officer/s

2. Please give tick mark to the following non-statutory welfare measures enjoyed by the employees of the organisation.

- Scheme 1. Personal health care (Regular medical check-ups)
- Scheme 2. Flexible working time
- Scheme 3. Employee assistance programmes including counselling
- Scheme 4. Protecting the aggrieved employees
- Scheme 5. Maternity & adoption leave
- Scheme 6. Medi-claim insurance
- Scheme 7. Employee referral scheme

3. Please write any other non-statutory measures availed by the employees in the organisation.

- Scheme a.
- Scheme b.
- Scheme c.

4. If you get a chance, what further employee welfare measure/s will you suggest? (show priority and write justification for each)

	Suggestion	Justification
Measure 1
Measure 2		
Measure 3
Measure 4		
Measure 5

(Signature)

Name:

Designation:

Years of experience in the organisation: 0-5/5-10/10-15/15-20/ 20+

Name of organisation:

Analysis

Percentage was the statistical technique used for analysis, for which tables are presented with an interpretation. Analysis has been done in four sections and those sections are explained in a sequence of the items in the tool:

Section 1. Statutory welfare measures known by the employees

Section 2. Non-statutory measures the employees could identify from the list

Section 3. Other non-statutory measures that the employees could enlist

Section 4. Further non-statutory measures that the labourers suggested

Statutory welfare measures known by the employees

Table 2. Percentage of respondents' knowledge towards each statutory welfare measure

Sl No,	Statutory welfare measures	Percentage of respondents who opted the measure
1.	Toilet facilities	100
2.	Facilities for storing and drying clothing	98
3.	Facilities for sitting at the work spot	98
4.	First aid facilities	99
5.	Canteen	100
6.	Shelters, rest rooms and lunch rooms	98
7.	Crèche	97
8.	Service of welfare officer	95

From the above table, it is clear that the respondents have higher level of knowledge, i.e. the range of 95 to 100, towards the components of statutory welfare measures. If the average of the components is taken, it is 98.125, which is very close to 100. It is found that almost 100% of the employees have the knowledge of the statutory welfare measures.

Toilet facilities and canteens are known by 100% as they are the most fundamental at a work place, while facilities for storing and drying clothing; sitting at the work spot; first-aid facilities, rest rooms and lunch rooms, are not known by 100% as they are below the fundamentals. The employees feel that the crèche and the service of the welfare officer/s are not crucial, due to their priority in individualised requirements. Hence for a few labourers these requirements are not bothering them.

Non-statutory measures the employees could identify from the list

The attempt of this item of the tool was for the collection of responses, to what extent the employees identified the non-statutory measures enjoyed by the same sample. The following table shows the percentage of employees, towards their knowledge of the components of non-statutory welfare measures:

Table 3. Percentage of respondents' knowledge towards each non-statutory welfare measure

Sl No,	Non-statutory welfare measures	Percentage of respondents who opted the measure
1.	Medi-claim insurance	100
2.	Maternity and adoption leave	100
3.	Employee assistance programmes	95
4.	Flexible working time	94
5.	Employee referral scheme	45
6.	Personal health care including medical check-up	78
7.	Protecting the aggrieved labourers	46

The knowledge on medi-claim and maternity-adoption leave is 100%, means all the employees are aware of these two welfare measures. The knowledge of employee assistance programme and knowledge about flexible working time is below 100, i.e. 95% and 94% respectively. Twenty two percent of the employees do not know about that there exists personal health care including regular medical check-up. More than 54% of the employees don't know that they enjoy employee referral scheme and the provision for protecting the aggrieved labourers.

Other non-statutory measures the employees could enlist

The objective of this item of the tool was to assess the knowledge of the labourers about the components other than the second item i.e. non-statutory welfare measures that they enjoyed. This was asked purposefully, to give a chance to remember any non-statutory component at any point of their service with the organisation.

Table 4. Percentage of respondents' knowledge towards other non-statutory welfare measures shown in table 2.

Sl No,	Non-statutory welfare measures	Percentage of respondents who opted the measure
1.	House loan at subsidised rate of interest	80
2.	Gift coupons for festivals	56

3.	Expenditure for painting/maintenance of house	78
4.	Consumer store	95

Among the four non-statutory welfare measures, 95 % of the respondents are aware of consumer store, because they are regularly enjoying the benefits of quality goods at low price in the purchase. Eighty percent of the labourers are aware of the house loan at subsidised rate of interest, but only 78% are unaware of the provision for painting/maintenance of the house. On certain seasons of the year, there is the provision for gift coupons for purchasing appliances or utensils from shops. But only 44% of the labourers are not aware of that provision. Almost all may be utilising this facility, but not conscious that this component is a part of non-statutory labour welfare measures.

Further non-statutory measures the labourers suggested

This item of the survey form was the most important one, in the sense that it asked the respondents about their suggestions for further non-statutory welfare measures or what they expect more in this category. Following is the table showing the requirement of the employees as further non-statutory welfare measures.

Table 5. Expectation of the respondents towards further statutory and non-statutory welfare measures

Sl No,	Non-statutory welfare measures	Percentage of respondents who opted the measure
1.	Internet charge	82
2.	Fuel allowance	81
3.	Educational loan at subsidised rate of interest for study abroad	78
4.	Vaccination against epidemics to all employees and their dependants	48
5.	Proper grievance redressal mechanism	68
6.	Full pension	65
7.	Washing facilities with washing machine	67

Among the six suggestions, internet charge was the most important one from the employees as the further welfare measure, which was demanded by 82% of the sample. Fuel allowance and educational loan at subsidised rate of interest were the other requirements demanded by 81% and 78 % respectively. Improved grievance redressal system demanded by 68%, 65% having the opinion of getting full pension and 67% demanded for improved washing facility system. Minority of the target group i.e. 48% suggested for vaccination for epidemics.

Another aspect of the study was inviting the justification for each further suggestion, whether statutory or non-statutory, for which the employees could give their explanation for demanding that particular one. Following is the table shows the summary of the requirements and the justification for each one.

Table 6. Explanation of the respondents for demanding further welfare measures

Sl No,	welfare measures	Summary of justification
1.	Internet charge	It has become part and parcel of information technology, which is expensive.
2.	Fuel allowance	Though conveyance at subsidised rate is available, using own car is inevitable.
3.	Educational loan at subsidised rate of interest for study abroad	Study abroad is highly expensive, but it has more prospectus of getting employment abroad.
4.	Vaccination for epidemics to employees and their dependants.	To attain immunity and to be safe.
5.	Proper grievance redressal mechanism	To avoid legal fight between employer and employee
6.	Full pension	Unexpected calamities and pandemics pave way for increasing the cost of living. In order to live a peaceful life after retirement, they wish to get full pension.
7.	Washing facilities with washing machine	Washing without machine is time consuming and difficult for the employees, because they are already tired of their daily work schedule.

In a way the above table shows the knowledge of the existing facilities, and the further expectations of the employees, either in the form of statutory or non-statutory welfare measures. The summary of justification presents the background against which the claims are forwarded by the employees. The employer shall take appropriate decisions for sanctioning the welfare measures.

Findings

- a) There is no 100% knowledge of the components of the statutory welfare measures among the employees.

- b) The knowledge on medi-claim and maternity-adoption leave is 100%, i.e. all the employees are aware of these two welfare measures. The range of percentage of knowledge of other components is 45 to 95.
- c) Among the other non-statutory welfare measures 80% of the labourers are aware of the house loan at subsidised rate of interest, but only 78% are unaware of the provision for painting/maintenance of the house.
- d) The respondents, i.e.48% highlighted the importance of free vaccination in the light of recurring pandemics in the country.
- e) Among the seven suggestions, internet charge was the most important one, which was demanded by 82% of the sample as the further welfare measure.
- f) The employees are capable of suggesting further welfare measures with their justifications, which is an evidence for their knowledge of existing provisions of statutory or non-statutory facilities.

Conclusion

Though the employees pointed out only a small number of further welfare measures, the researcher made an attempt of her own, to suggest certain facilities in the following table, with justification of each.

Table 7. Explanation of the researcher for demanding further welfare measures

Sl No,	Welfare measures	Summary of justifications
1.	Immediate financial help during natural calamities	This suggestion is on the experience of flood in 2018 and 2019 and threat of flood in2021.
2.	Concession for foreign tour once in the service	An ordinary employee cannot raise fund for foreign tour ever in the service from his/her own income.
3.	Financial aid for vegetable gardening and rearing animals	Both activities are productive for the family members, which may promote self-sufficiency.
4	Increasing the limit of medical re-imburement	To meet the huge medical expenses for the employees and family.
5	Stress management programmes	Toincrease the efficiency of employees, which will lead organisation's failure.

As the economic theorists know, a major part of the national income is the contribution of the public sector undertakings in the country. The government can effectively utilise this profit for the development of the country. Investment in labour capital in the form of further welfare measures will befruitful to the government as well as the employers, and

also it will bring prosperity to all concerned. The importance of labour reflected in the words of great economist Adam Smith, "It was not by gold or by silver, but by labour, that all wealth of the world was originally purchased"

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